

Soviet History:

Countering misperceptions and
promoting re-conceptions



An online journal by LeftistCritic

Editor's Note: Introducing *Soviet History*

Hello everybody. This is the second issue of a journal meant to accompany the new subreddit titled Soviet History. This journal reprints accounts from myself, LeftistCritic. This journal will go on a time frame as to not increase the strain on the person assembling the journal at the current time. It is possible that this journal will take submissions in the future. Enjoy!

Best regards,
LeftistCritic

The Great October Socialist Revolution and early history of the Soviet Union

Published on December 21, 2016, reprinted [from my wordpress](#)



"Woman-worker, the cooperative frees you from the reign of the kitchen and the cooking pot." A 1923 poster in the Soviet Union as noted in a post by Soviet Visuals.

The absurd, unsubstantiated conspiracy that Russia (or more specifically Vladimir Putin) rigged the U.S. election so Donald Trump could win is currently dominating the bourgeois media. Recently,

Western-friendly reformer Mikhail Gorbachev, who presided over the end of the Soviet Union and past Estonian president [Toomas Hendrick Ilves](#) declared that a new Russian nationalist union could be formed within the borders of the former Soviet Union.¹

Regardless of whether such a union is a possibility, with the strong degree of nationalism and justified anger at the United States within the Russian Federation, the history of the Soviet Union is more important than ever. Due to the bourgeois and Trotskyist distortions of Soviet history and the nature of the socialist state, writing such a history is a challenge but is possible in a way that depicts the nation accurately, rather than within malice. This article is the beginning of a series on Soviet history, this article covering the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917, the early years of the revolutionary Bolshevik government which fought against imperialist invaders (1917-1922), and the first decade of Soviet existence (1923-1933).

The Czarist monarchy and the lead up to the Great October Socialist Revolution

The peasants and the population as a whole suffered under the iron fist of the Tsar/Czar. Meanwhile, the Russian middle class, which can be viewed as synonymous with the bourgeoisie, enjoyed leisure time, the “western import” of national theater, in which actors were commodities, and were supported by heavy state subsidies in certain industries, a feature of Russian capitalism.”² These privileged Russians included [Sergey Produkin-Garsky](#) who traveled around the empire with funding from Tsar Nicholas II to take “[more than 10,000 full cover photographs](#)” which captured “the diverse people who...made up the Russian Empire, before the revolution.”

In 1905, the equation changed. Only two years earlier the [Bolshevik sect](#) was formed, with the overarching party, the [Russian Social Democratic Labor Party](#) (RSDRP), agreeing on the need for a coming revolution with the ultimate end of establishing socialism. In this party there were also the Mensheviks who believed in the broad base of membership but the Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, believed that there should be only militant revolutionaries in the party. Both of ideas were formed as the proletariat rose up. This was described by Lenin, in late January 1905 as the following: “...the proletariat has risen against Tsarism...the general strike in Petersburg is spreading...The revolution is spreading to waiver.”³

Lenin further called for the “arming of the people,” saying that “only an armed people can be a real stronghold on national freedom,” and that all revolutionaries must unite for the immediate overthrow of the bourgeois Tsarist government.⁴ Years later he was much more critical. While he talked about the [massacre](#) of workers (“Bloody Sunday”) who [petitioned](#) the Tsar on January 22, 1905, the mutinies in the army, and the proletariat were at the head of the revolution and struggle forming Soviets (worker’s councils) but that its social content was “bourgeois-democratic.”⁵ Still, the revolution had a broad significance. Even as bourgeois scholars like Max Weber downplayed it, the revolution was “the prologue of the coming...proletarian socialist revolution” which occurred twelve years later.⁶ This was even confirmed by communistphobic scholars like [Louise McReynolds](#). She wrote that the revolution in 1905 not only led to fears about the “violent potential of the lower classes” but it led to easing of

restrictions on political expression, which, when combined with an expanding economy, led to growing commercial leisure for the bourgeoisie.⁷

After the revolution, elements of the RSDRP went head-to-head [once again](#). The Mensheviks were dedicated to the idea of the proletariat being a revolutionary force on their own while the Bolsheviks argued that the proletariat, along with the peasants, would lead the revolution. Furthermore, the Bolsheviks said that the 1905 revolution was bourgeois, showing that there was a strong capitalist Russia, while the Mensheviks believed that an autocracy still existed meaning the that Tsar should be overthrown and replaced with a bourgeois government! Ultimately, as the 1910s passed, the Bolsheviks would take a hard line against the First World War, calling it, rightly, an imperialist war which would slaughter and divide the working classes of Europe, leading to vicious police persecution of the party itself.

At the same time, the laborers in North and Central Russia were suffering. A British correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, [Morgan Phillips Price](#) wrote that the peasants, skilled artisans, and others all suffered “in different ways under the same yoke of Tsarism” while the Russian capitalist class shared spoils with French, Belgian, German, and British capitalists, who owned much of the economy.⁸ This was all part of, as Price put it, the “maintenance of Tsarism and the system of exploitation of the Russian workers and peasants.”

1917 was an [eventful year](#) for the Russian people. In the first two months of the year, thousands of soldiers deserted, the Bolsheviks organized demonstrations to commemorate Bloody Sunday (mentioned two paragraphs earlier), crowds of women in Petrograd (later called Leningrad and currently [Saint Petersburg](#)) sporadically broke into stores, and thousands upon thousands of workers from 58 workers went on strike. On February 23, the “February Revolution” began.

The Tsarist government was in total turmoil. While the non-cohesive Russian army was breaking down, so was the economy, coupled with industrial mobilization during wartime which hurt the proletariat and led to violent demonstrations in Petrograd in late February.⁹ As the established Duma, dominated by bourgeois members, discussed its mandate, the worker’s councils (Soviets), that represented the common people, wanted to replace and supplant Tsarist authority.¹⁰ On March 2, the Tsar abdicated ([some question](#) the legality of this action), leading to the creation of a provisional government the next day which was supported by the Ispolkom/Petrograd Soviet, not yet with Bolsheviks in the majority.¹¹ Of course, the Bolsheviks wanted immediate peace and to end [the imperialist war in Europe](#) even when the majority of the members in the Soviets, like the one in Petrograd, did not necessarily agree with them.

In March 1917, Lenin wrote about the situation in Russia, just like [he had written](#) about the revolution in 1905:

“The first revolution engendered by the imperialist world war has broken out...the first stage of our revolution will certainly not be the last...the February-March revolution of 1917...has been marked...by a joint blow at Tsarism...the workers of the whole of

Russia...fought for freedom, land for the peasants, and for peace, against the imperialist slaughter...[but] this new government...[is made up of a] class...of capitalist landlords and bourgeoisie which has long been ruling our country economically...the Tsarist monarchy has been smashed, but not fully destroyed.”

The provisional government was by no means a revolutionary one. Years later, the [Great Soviet Encyclopedia](#) described as a “bourgeois-democratic revolution” which made US elites uneasy so they recognized the provisional government with millions of dollars.¹² This provisional government, soon led by [Alexander Kerensky](#), was timid. While the peasants, urban workers, and other members of the proletariat wanted peace to prevent a “terrible catastrophe” in Russia caused by German invasion, but the Kerensky government did not try and control the war profiteers or industrial syndicates created by the Tsar.¹³ Of course, the Mensheviks supported this governments, with hopes of influencing it, which led to “industrial anarchy” as pro-landlord policies came down the pipe, with, as Price puts it, “complete anarchy...reigning in the central provinces of Russia on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution” as the outlook of the masses seemed hopeless.¹⁴

Lenin acknowledged these issues in his articles through March. He [wrote](#) that the proletariat cannot support a “war government” and that a workers militia should be formed, along with mass organization of all able-bodied people of “both sexes.” Later in the month, [he added](#) that the new government could only be overthrown if bourgeois intelligentsia and the Russian bourgeoisie’s organization is countered, with the need of revolutionary government which is not bourgeois. The same month, Lenin [wrote](#) about the imperialist nature of World War I, saying that there can only be peace when power is in the “hands of the workers and poorest peasants” rather than the Russian bourgeoisie, and that victory is possible even as the “[transition to socialism](#)” cannot be established in one stroke.

As the months neared toward the socialist revolution, the Bolsheviks were under attack. While socialist intellectuals and populists had excluded the Bolsheviks from power in Kerensky’s provisional government, Lenin was rallying the Bolsheviks, telling them that property, land, and banks needed to be nationalized, a people’s militia created, end to the imperialist war, and all power given to the Soviets.¹⁵ As the months passed, the “masses of people” opposed the Kerensky government, supported by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, with some Soviets remaining conservative, meaning that, as socialist writer John Reed [put it](#), Russia before the “November insurrection seems...almost incredibly conservative.” More specifically, during this time period, [Pravda](#), the Bolshevik publication begun publishing again, Poland’s independence was refused by the provisional government, there were massive May Day celebrations, the First [All-Russian Congress of Soviets](#) met, and the Mensheviks not surprisingly became very anti-Bolshevik. Beyond this, the Russian front against the Germans began folding away as soldiers deserted and millions went on strike in early July. As time went on, it was on the side of the Bolsheviks, who, after a failed attempt to seize power in Petrograd in July, were itching for a “second revolution,” this one of socialist and proletarian character and content.¹⁶

As revolution came to its final conclusion, the Bolsheviks were gaining ground. In September, General Lavr Kornilov [tried](#) to make himself a “military dictator” in Russia, with the Socialist Revolutionaries

and Mensheviks not helping protect the city of Petrograd from imminent attack.¹⁷ Ultimately, the government could do nothing to maintain order, but the Petrograd garrison, mainly composed of the pro-Bolshevik and working class elements, defended the city and its inhabitants. Even as the Petrograd soviet voted to not strike and voted against the death penalty, the Bolsheviks [held off Kornilov's invading forces](#) and resolved to create a socialist (and Soviet) government. In September, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) tried to reassert their influence in the Petrograd Soviet, but failed, and in October, there was mass mutiny in the front lines. The Bolsheviks took an understandable hard line, saying that they would not participate in the conferences put on the Kerensky government, and instead were fully dedicated to overthrowing it instead.

Recounting the Great October Socialist Revolution

In Late October, the revolution sprung to life. On October 24 and 25th, the Red Guards, under the command of Lenin, seized important institutions in Petrograd, allowing the Bolsheviks to be in control.¹⁸ The following day, October 26, Lenin announced the formation of a new government. By November 5, the Mensheviks and SRs had walked out of the Second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, Kerensky fled and started a counter-revolutionary rebellion, and the Bolshevik government¹⁹ said it will censor hostile bourgeois newspapers, a declaration of rights for the Soviet people was announced and Moscow was secured by the Bolsheviks.²⁰

John Reed meticulously accounts the days of the Great October Socialist Revolution (October Revolution for short). On November 4, he [writes](#) that immense meetings were planned across Petrograd as the provisional government seemed hopeless. Three days later, on November 7, the Bolsheviks declared they had overthrown the provisional government as Red Guards fought “[Junkers](#),” former imperial Russian officers, and there was an “atmosphere of recklessness,” with all “great Russia to win—and then the world,” begging the question if others would follow.²¹ The following days led to more excitement. On November 8, the whole nation was up in “long hissing swells of storm” with rumors of Kerensky spreading throughout Petrograd, with vitriol from anti-Bolshevik newspapers, some of which was consolidated into the Committee for Salvation in the planned offensive against the Bolsheviks.²² Still, they held on, as did the left SRs (right SRs were anti-Bolshevik), with Lenin and Leon Trotsky/Trotsky leaving themselves dedicated to the new Bolshevik government while others, like followers of anarchist Peter Kropotkin, refused to support this new government because the revolution had “failed” to arouse the “patriotism of the masses” in their view.²³

The following days only increased the pressure on the young Bolshevik government. On November 9, the Soviets in Petrograd defended the city, with the Red Guard and sailors fighting to defend the revolution, a government of “united democracy” which did not ally with the bourgeoisie, with the Bolsheviks thinking that the fate of the revolution rested on their shoulders.²⁴ The following day, the Committee of Salvation, right SRs, and Mensheviks all worked against the Bolsheviks, with the arsenal in Petrograd remaining in the hands of counter revolutionaries, and, as the invasion of Petrograd seemed imminent, the “revolutionary proletariat [was] defending...the capital of the workers’ and

peasants' republic!"²⁵ The following day, Kerensky entered the city of [Tsarskoye Selo](#), trying to command soldiers to disarm, but they refused to do so and were subsequently killed.²⁶ Also on that day, the city of Petrograd was clearly under Bolshevik military control with desperate fighting by the Junkers/Yunkers, and the Bolsheviks seized the switchboard room in the city. As John Reed tells it, when the hardened fighters entered the room, "many pretty girls" who had been switchboard operators left and hurled insults at them even though these fighters did not insult anyone, with the result of their departure meaning that there few volunteers to operate the telephone line switchboard.²⁷ Still, with the force and dedication to revolution, enough people were found to make sure the telephone lines were operational. Later in the day, the Committee of Salvation was outlawed, and the "telephone girls" who had insulted the Bolsheviks told the committee that they "suffered" at the hands of the proletariat, as they kissed up to established power structures.

Two days later, the revolution was advancing with speed. Petrograd was clearly under Bolshevik control but there was the "question of finances" since banks didn't want to cooperate with the new Bolshevik government.²⁸ In the days that followed, it was clear that the Bolsheviks, on whom the landless peasants, "undemoralised soldiers," sailors, and rank-and-file workers supported, were up against investors, landowners, army officers, students, shopkeepers, and many more, were a powerful force.²⁹ In Moscow, on November 16, Bolsheviks hung banners declaring the beginning of the revolution, with poor and toiling marching across Red Square.³⁰ Additionally, the Bolshevik government published a declaration of rights (mentioned earlier), which said that all peoples shall have sovereignty, equality, ability to develop minority and ethnic groups freely, right to self-determination, and abolition of privileges and disabilities for nationalities and religious persuasions.³¹ The provisional government was gone but the Bolsheviks were in for a big fight, with restrictions on newspapers that were anti-Bolshevik, fighting to "erect the framework of the new" and against those who tried to win in the coming civil war.³²

Imperialists try to destabilize a new nation: 1917-1922

The Bolshevik government had acted quickly. Not long after its creation, the Second Congress of Soviets [had declared](#) that land would be given back to the peasantry and peace formed on all fronts. Some, such as feminist and political scientist [Valerie Bryson](#), have declared that feminist concerns of Russian women were pushed aside by the revolution (and Bolshevik government), seen as not a "political priority" by Lenin, and praised Trotsky for a "progressive" view on the subject. Beyond this, Bryson also cites Left Oppositionist Alexandra Kollantai's "failed efforts" and "sexual morality" of communism preventing needed changes in society, including in child rearing, before Kollantai apparently lose "real influence" in Soviet society in 1923, painting Stalin as "bad."³³ Apart from the obvious bourgeois analysis here, Bryson is clearly wrong on the implication that the October Socialist Revolution was not "feminist." Sir Arthur Newholme and John Adams Kinsbury [wrote in the early 1930s](#) the following about women in Soviet Russia:

“Sex differences were swept away by an early act of the Soviet government; and equality was carried into the marriage relation. Either partner is free to dissolve it [marriage] at his or her own free will or caprice.”

Another place to look for evidence of Bolshevik accomplishment is the [constitution](#) of 1918, of [the RSFSR](#), a precursor to the USSR in 1922. This constitution [declared](#) that:

1. “all private property in land is abolished, and the entire land is declared to be national property and is to be apportioned among agriculturists without compensation of the former owners, to the measure of each one’s ability to till it” (Article One, Chapter 2)
2. “All forests, treasures of the earth, and waters of general public utility, all equipment whether animate or inanimate, model farms and agricultural enterprises, are declared to be national property” (Article One, Chapter 2)
3. “complete transfer of ownership to the Soviet Republic of all factories, mills, mines, railways, and other means of production and transportation” (Article One, Chapter 2)
4. “annulment of loans made by the Government of the Czar, by landowners and the bourgeoisie” (Article One, Chapter 2)
5. “...transfer of all banks to the ownership of the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government” (Article One, Chapter 2)
6. “Universal obligation to work” (Article One, Chapter 2)
7. “decreed that all workers be armed, and that s Socialist Red Army be organized and the propertied class disarmed” (Article One, Chapter 2)
8. “abrogating secret treaties, of organizing on a wide scale the fraternization of the workers and peasants of the belligerent armies, and of making all efforts to conclude a general democratic peace” in the first imperialist war (WWI) (Article One, Chapter 3)
9. Insistence on ending “the barbarous policy of the bourgeois civilization which enables the exploiters of a few chosen nations to enslave hundreds of millions of the working population of Asia, of the colonies, and of small countries generally” (Article One, Chapter 3)
10. Supports “the full independence of Finland, in withdrawing troops from Persia, and in proclaiming the right of Armenia to self-determination” (Article One, Chapter 3)
11. “the exploiters should not hold a position in any branch of the Soviet Government” (Article One, Chapter 4)
12. “...leaving to the workers and peasants of every people to decide the following question at their plenary sessions of their soviets, namely, whether or not they desire to participate, and on what basis, in the Federal government and other Federal soviet institutions” (Article One, Chapter 4)

Article 2 continued in the same vein. This article [declared](#) that working people and peasants shall have the power in the country, especially in their Soviets, along with the declarations that:

1. "For the purpose of securing to the workers real freedom of conscience, the church is to be separated from the state and the school from the church, and the right of religious and anti-religious propaganda is accorded to every citizen."
2. "...abolishes all dependence of the Press upon capital, and turns over to the working people and the poorest peasantry all technical and material means for the publication of newspapers, pamphlets, books, etc., and guarantees their free circulation throughout the country."
3. "offers to the working class and to the poorest peasantry furnished halls, and [the government] takes care of their heating and lighting appliances."
4. "the task of furnishing full and general free education to the workers and the poorest peasantry" is offered by the government
5. The government "considers work the duty of every citizen of the Republic, and proclaims as its motto: 'He shall not eat who does not work.'"
6. The government "recognizes the duty of all citizens of the Republic to come to the defense of their socialist fatherland, and it therefore introduces universal military training. The honor of defending the revolution with arms is accorded only to the workers"
7. Granting "all political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners who live in the territory of the Russian Republic and are engaged in work and who belong to the working class."
8. Offering "shelter to all foreigners who seek refuge from political or religious persecution."
9. Recognizing "equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of their racial or national connections, proclaims all privileges on this ground, as well as oppression of national minorities, to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic."
10. The government "deprives all individuals and groups of rights which could be utilized by them to the detriment of the socialist revolution."

I could go on, as the Constitution has Articles [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), and [6](#), but I think you get the point.

As the revolution's conclusion was evident, the bourgeois press in England and France bellowed about "cruelties" of the Bolsheviks.³⁴ So, the propaganda spewed against revolutionary governments of Iran, Syria, and Cuba (to give a few examples) in the present-day, is nothing new. What the propagandists in 1917 and 1918 didn't realize was that, as [deaf-blind](#) socialist and writer Helen Keller [wrote](#)

"...the Russian revolution did not originate with Lenin...I see the furrow Lenin left sown with the unshatterable seed of new life for mankind, and cast deep below the rolling tides of storm and lightning, mighty crops for the ages to reap."

The seizure of power by the proletariat, which had [been carefully thought out](#) and planned, was what, [Anne Louise Strong](#), a long supporter of communist movements in Russia and China, called this "[common consciousness in action](#)." Mao Zedong, who later was one of the leaders of China's communist revolution, recognized the same in 1927, when he [wrote](#) that "the October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history...it exerted influence in the other countries of the world." The Great Soviet Encyclopedia also echoed this, writing that the impact of the "Great October

Socialist Revolution,” as they called it, had profound significance, especially by “strengthening the revolutionary movement in the USA.”³⁵

While there were many forces aligned against the Bolshevik government, the Russians still defended the social revolution, fighting for the working class, with Russians seeing the revolution as meaning “[peace, land to the peasants, and workers’ control of industry](#).” The Bolshevik government was trying to keep in place its proletarian state as the capitalist apparatus of power instilled by the provisional government, was swept away, following the ideas of Lenin.³⁶ By this time, the revolution had matured, clearly, from its earlier days.³⁷ But it was not wholly secure. For one, the socialist revolution in October had pushed to lead the country out of “imperialist war and economic ruin” as Josef Stalin put it.³⁸ While the path to socialism was cleared for the “middle non-proletarian peasant strata of all nationalities and tribes,” getting Russia out of the imperialist war was harder.³⁹

The necessity of ending Russia’s participation in the imperialist war was evident, as it was necessary to preserve “the social revolution in Russia.”⁴⁰ The Bolshevik government tried to push for peace. However, after the Germans lost patience with the new government, they advanced at an alarming pace into the country in “Operation Thunderbolt” as they called it.⁴¹ With the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Livotsk, on terms that, arguably, benefited Germany and their empire but removed Russia from the war. Lenin’s words about soldiers deserting from the front, as “[voting with their feet](#)” with peace could also be applied to the signing of this treaty. After this peace was evident, the Bolshevik government did not have many traditionally disciplined soldiers, leading to the [creation of a Red Army](#), and recognizing Finland’s independence.⁴² What followed was civil war.

The Bolsheviks were under attack from all sides. While they were under siege, they tried to take control of strategic natural resources in central Asia but were originally unsuccessful.⁴³ Famed British military (and bourgeois) historian, [John Keegan](#), who supported wars in Vietnam, Kosovo (1998), and Iraq (2003), had an interesting and bizarre perspective on the Western intervention in Russia. He first claimed that Trotsky invited British marines to help the Red Army gain armaments and fight anti-Bolshevik forces, that the Bolsheviks held a “common interest” with the Western allies until at least April 1918, that the allied intervention was apparently not originally anti-Bolshevik but became so with Western allies supporting the White Russians, Czech forces, and other anti-Bolsheviks, while the Germans were “neutral” in the civil war.⁴⁴

Like with all propaganda, there is a kernel of truth. In 1918, after the end of the imperialist world war, the British, French, Japanese, and US intervened in Russia. However, to act like they are “innocent” in this intervention is silly. The US State Department admitted this much, saying that “all these operations were to offset effects of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia,” showing that the idea the Allies entered to stop Germany from seizing Russian supplies and assisting Czech troops, who had been part of the Austro-Hungarian empire’s forces, was a convenient excuse to deny imperialist aims.⁴⁵ As Stalin put it in [a speech commemorating](#) the 24th celebration of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which was on the eve of the Great Patriotic War, often called World War II in the West:

“Recall the year 1918, when we celebrated the first anniversary of the October Revolution. At that time three-quarters of our country was in the hands of foreign interventionists. We had temporarily lost the Ukraine, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Urals, Siberia and the Far East. We had no allies, we had no Red Army—we had only just begun to create it—and we experienced a shortage of bread, a shortage of arms, a shortage of equipment. At that time 14 states [Czechoslovakia, the UK, Canada, Australia, India, Japan, Greece, Poland, the United States, France, Romania, Serbia, Italy, and China] were arrayed against our country but we did not become despondent or downhearted. In the midst of the conflagration of war we organized the Red Army and converted our country into a military camp. The spirit of Lenin inspired us at that time for war against the interventionists, regained all our lost territories and achieved victory.”

The Great Soviet Encyclopedia added to this. They noted that the US and other countries tried to engage in broader intervention and a blockade of Russia even as the Soviets proposed normalization of relations with the US as an option, but this was rejected.⁴⁶ While the imperialists may have schemed to use the [Kellogg-Briand Pact](#) to isolate the Soviet Union in later years (originally they excluded them but included them after international pressure) and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-1920 in the same way, the masses of the world didn't necessarily agree.⁴⁷ There was a campaign against US intervention in Russia from those such as John Reed (quoted extensively earlier in this article), socialist leader Eugene Debs, and ordinary folks in Seattle and San Francisco.⁴⁸ Ultimately, the Great October Socialist Revolution not only led to the formation of a pro-Bolshevik Communist Party, in the US, in 1919, but it resulted in the end of US involvement in Russia in 1920 due to popular pressure, deportation of radicals to Russia, and the partially failed Palmer raids in 1920.⁴⁹ Sadly, in Germany, in 1919, a communist revolution, led by Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht, among others, was brutally crushed, with both of them killed by state police.⁵⁰

The situation back in Russia is worth noting. During the [five year brutal civil war](#), mainly fought from November 1917 to October 1922, with some resistance hanging on until June 1923, the government [adopted an economic program of “War Communism”](#) as it was later called, in order to survive, which was later replaced during the rebuilding period with the New Economic Policy and other policies. At the same time, the officers of the Red Army [were in hundreds of schools](#), with the most important part a political-cultural department which tried to spread communist propaganda among the ranks of the army, which was made up of “ignorant peasants” as John Reed described it. There were also “labor armies” which were helping repair destroyed bridges, once the war was over, with a more established Bolshevik (and later Soviet) order than ever. Such labor armies harkened back to the idea of “industrial armies” in agriculture proposed by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*.⁵¹ As for the education in the Red Army, an organization that was like the “special corps” of armed workers envisioned by Marx in his 1850 address to the Communist League, it was similar to the ideas of political education proposed by Lenin on multiple occasions.⁵²

Of course, bourgeois scholars like Louise McReynolds have declared that the Bolsheviks saw themselves as intelligentsia (wrong), created a new Soviet culture that nationalized the commercial

market (likely true), and co-opted leisure which had been for the bourgeoisie to promote socialist ideals (also likely true).⁵³ By 1921, the [21 people](#) who were on the Bolshevik's Central Committee in 1917 has partially gone their separate ways, with some going into the Political Bureau, and others (Lenin, Trotsky (until later), and Stalin) were in a more of a leading role, and some joining the anti-Bolshevik forces. Still, as Helen Keller argued, the Russians were a people who "[were trying to work out their form of government.](#)" She also said, in words that some favorable to the Russian government could repeat today, that she loved "[Russia and all who stand loyally by her in her mighty wrestlings with... imperialist greed,](#)" while condemning workers in the US for not standing with the new country, and saying that famine in Russia was a result of war and imperialist blockade.

The first Soviet decade: 1923-1933

On December 29, 1922, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed. The measures of War Communism were abandoned in place of the New Economic Policy (NEP) which introduced market measures in order to, in theory, rebuild the country from war, an ideas which was proposed (and advocated by) Lenin. This led to a struggle within the Russian Communist Party, which had evolved from the RSDRP's Bolshevik section established in 1912, or Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) formed in 1918. Ultimately, in order to preserve the USSR as a socialist state, the "Left Opposition" was [purged in 1927](#), as was Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin. While some may say this is anti-democratic, they must consider that Stalin was following, for one, what he said years earlier: that the Communist Party needs to have "iron discipline," unity of will, and purge "opportunistic elements" so it can effectively serve the proletariat.⁵⁴ Other than this, Stalin was also preserving the party as an "organized detachment" of the proletariat, a vanguard of the working class, allowing the party to reorganize along "new, revolutionary lines."⁵⁵ Additionally, there needed to be unity in order to counter the "need of a constantly expanding market" for the bourgeoisie and to make sure the Soviets are the "grave-diggers" of capitalism in Russia and elsewhere, not supporting it with certain measures, like NEP, even if it was partially good.⁵⁶ Ultimately, there cannot be a "revolution in permanence," a precursor to Trotsky's idea of "permanent revolution" which is discussed later, without a unified party.⁵⁷

Before getting to the other aspects of the first years of the USSR, it is best to acknowledge a number of aspects, including of the NEP period (discussed more in detail later). Anna Louise Strong [said that in 1925](#), at least, every factory, mine, and economic entity was hungry for credit, and industries were supposed to be "[self-supporting](#)" after the beginning of NEP. While some may cringe at this, justifiably, there were a number of good strides, even in hard times. For one, there were [strong restrictions on alcohol](#) in society, a war against bootleggers, with the focus on drinking not as an individual problem but as a "social injury." At the same time, there was a major focus on teaching in Russia, just like the political education of Red Army members mentioned in the previous section of this article. As Strong noted, from April to August 1923, the Moscow Government Publishing House [printed 160 million copies of textbooks](#) for the new system of education modeled on the "[Dewey ideas of education.](#)" This

form of education was advanced and a “gorgeous plan,” with education projects assisted by the government even as some teachers were antagonistic to the changes in education due to their ignorance.

While this was going on, there was political strife, which was referenced earlier. Strong, in 1925, in an opinion [that seemed to lean toward Trotsky](#), after Lenin’s death, claimed that Lenin was the “father of the revolution,” Trotsky as “popular” leader, and Stalin as a tactful politician. She continued by claiming that the old Bolsheviks were behind Stalin, who didn’t know many Western languages as Trotskyists, and differ on the debate over socialism in Russia, with Trotsky “broken” by Stalin. She even claimed that “no one would die for Stalin” which is totally absurd. Putting aside the pro-Trotsky viewpoint of Strong, it is important to talk about the debate between Trotsky and Stalin over socialism in Russia. In the *Foundations of Leninism*, a quote of which is [reproduced here](#), Stalin wrote that socialist revolution which is successful in one country must not be self-sufficient but should aid the the “victory of the proletariat in other countries” so that the victory of socialism is clear. The main debate is this, as highlighted by [one WordPress blogger](#): the idea of “permanent revolution” posed by Trotsky expands on the idea that revolution can occur in a “backward” country rather than an “advanced country” and that revolution cannot succeed if cannot be successful in the rest of the world. As for Stalin’s idea of “socialism in one country,” this recognizes the successful socialist revolution in Russia, but says that socialist construction under NEP, for example, can happen in one country, with socialism ultimately successful worldwide.⁵⁸

Stalin himself, explained what “socialism in one country” [meant in December 1925](#):

“... the possibility of the victory of Socialism in one country...mean[s] the possibility of solving the contradictions between the proletariat and the peasantry with the aid of the internal forces of our country, the possibility of the proletariat assuming power and using that power to build a complete Socialist society in, our country, with the sympathy and the support of the proletarians of other countries, but without the preliminary victory of the proletarian revolution in other countries. Without such a possibility, the building of Socialism is building without prospects, building without being sure that Socialism will be built. It is no use building Socialism without being sure that we can build it, without being sure that the technical backwardness of our country is not an insuperable obstacle to the building of complete Socialist society. To deny such possibility is to display lack of faith in the cause of building Socialism, to abandon Leninism...the impossibility of the complete, final victory of Socialism in one country without the victory of the revolution in other countries...mean[s] the impossibility of having full guarantees against intervention and consequently against the restoration of the bourgeois order, without the victory of the [proletarian] revolution in at least a number of countries. To deny this indisputable thesis is to abandon internationalism, to abandon Leninism...And if our country is discredited the world revolutionary movement will be weakened.”

Christina Kaier, a professor at Northwestern University who specializes in “[Russian and Soviet Art](#),” among other aspects gives the next part of the story. She describes the NEP, a period she says lasted from 1921 to circa 1928, was a “relatively peaceful and semicapitalist period in Soviet history,” which retreated from the War Communism during the Russian Civil War, with “free exchange” legalized and

pushed by Lenin, which was seen as the next step to a socialist future, with Soviet state-owned enterprises competing in the NEP market.⁵⁹ A major downside of NEP was the creation of the “Nepmen” or NEP bourgeoisie which supported avant-garde artists but also were very greedy, with a noticeable disparity between workers and management, class distinctions reappearing in society, and firms dominated by the profit motive.⁶⁰ Despite all these downsides, in a country with a mainly agricultural economy at the time, there were positive elements. The creation of a “communist culture” in the new nation was realized by making constructivist art a political project of the state to counter bourgeois art with useful, utilitarian objects for the “new socialist collective” but also the ideas of an “object as comrade” or “socialist object” to replace commodity pleasures.⁶¹ To promote such utilitarian objects, and tap into “commodity aesthetics and consumer desires” during the NEP, with advertising to promote products, which were seen as “transitional objects” as well, they were displayed at an avant-garde exhibition in Paris in 1924, at a time that Soviet industry was still recovering from wartime.⁶² The philosophy of those creating the objects was put forward by [Aleksander M. Rodchenko](#) in the spring of 1925:

“The light from the East [the Soviet Union] is not only the liberation of workers, the light from the East is in the new relation to the person, to women, to things, our things in our hands must be equals.”

Examples of this are abound, some of whom were in the [October Group](#) of Soviet constructivist artists. [Vladimir Tatlin](#), who shifted to creating utilitarian objects, creating a stove, pot, and other items to help in the home.⁶³ As for Lubov Popova and Varvara Stepanova (married to Rodchenko), they proposed designs for “everyday, utilitarian things,” specifically a simple “flapper dress” which was “mass-produced and distributed in Soviet economy.”⁶⁴ These dresses were austere but unisex and androgynous.⁶⁵

By 1926, the gradual dismantling of NEP was beginning, scrapped by the 1928/1929, when Stalin was in a more powerful position than before.⁶⁶ Kaier, apart from her bizarre Freudian claims about Soviet objects, seemed to be writing a fair history (not communist or radical however) except when it came to what happened next and aspects of the Soviet government. In an almost negative tone, she mentioned the “mechanisms of party control over people’s lives,” the “Stalinist socialist realism in the 1930s,” and seemed to be snarky about the hardline approach by the Soviets toward prostitution and “nonparty women.”⁶⁷ Hence, while Kaier makes valuable contributions to history of the USSR, she falters by acting like Stalin is “bad” as he came to the scene. Trotskyist Chris Harman, in a similar vein, claims that Stalin gained “real” power in 1923-1924 and “absolute” power in 1928-1929. Without citing the specific page in his book, *A People’s History of the World*, praised by “popular historian” Howard Zinn, Harman is deluded. Even a quick glance at Stalin’s wikipedia page shows that he was the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU from April 3, 1922 to October 18, 1952, over thirty years, but Harman may be referring to his “consolidation” of power in 1928-1929 possibly, who knows.

Kaier and Harman are not the only ones that sneer at Stalin. Louise McReynolds, who was criticized earlier in this article, follows suit, treating the trumpeting of socialist values in mass culture of the USSR by the CPSU as “bad.”⁶⁸ These claims are further preposterous when one considers that Stalin pushed for rapid industrialization and an end to the NEP, coupled with collectivization of agriculture when there was a shortfall in grain stores. Of course, a few, such as Nikolai Bukharin and Alexey Rytov opposed these policies but the Politburo rightly sided with Stalin, meaning that Rytov and Bukharin were pushed out for good reason. Lest us forget that under Stalin’s direction (and not only him), the [first five-year plan](#) was proposed in the USSR as a centrally-planned economy began to be constructed. Stephen Gowans noted, [in his article](#) about publicly-owned and planned economies, that they work despite the bourgeois propaganda that asserts otherwise.

“The Soviet Union was a concrete example of what a publicly owned, planned economy could produce: full employment, guaranteed pensions, paid maternity leave, limits on working hours, free healthcare and education (including higher education), subsidized vacations, inexpensive housing, low-cost childcare, subsidized public transportation, and rough income equality. Most of us want these benefits...when the Soviet economy was publicly owned and planned, from 1928 to 1989, it reliably expanded from year to year, except during the war years. To be clear, while capitalist economies plunged into a major depression and reliably lapsed into recessions every few years, the Soviet economy just as unfailingly did not, expanding unremittingly and always providing jobs for all. Far from being unworkable, the Soviet Union’s publicly owned and planned economy succeeded remarkably well. What was unworkable was capitalism, with its occasional depressions, regular recessions, mass unemployment, and extremes of wealth and poverty...What eventually led to the Soviet Union’s demise was the accumulated toll on the Soviet economy of the West’s efforts to bring it down, the Reagan administration’s intensification of the Cold War, and the Soviet leadership’s inability to find a way out of the predicament these developments occasioned...the Soviet economic system had...worked better than capitalism...Encouraged to believe that the Soviet economic system had failed, many people, including both communist supporters and detractors of the Soviet Union, concluded that a system of public ownership and planning is inherently flawed...the Soviet model of public ownership and planning...never once, except during the extraordinary years of World War II, stumbled into recession, nor failed to provide full employment...The benefits of the Soviet economic system were found in the elimination of the ills of capitalism... Among the most important accomplishments of the Soviet economy was the abolition of unemployment...From the moment in 1928 that the Soviet economy became publicly owned and planned, to the point in 1989 that the economy was pushed in a free market direction, Soviet GDP per capita growth exceeded that of all other countries but Japan, South Korea and Taiwan...the Soviet economy grew rapidly from 1928 to 1989 [but] it never surpassed the economies of North America, Western Europe and Japan...Soviet leaders recognized that a planned, publicly owned economy was an anathema to the captains of industry and titans of finance who use their wealth and connections to dominate policy in capitalist countries...Every year, from 1928 to 1989, except during the war years, the Soviet economy reliably expanded, providing jobs, shelter, and a wide array of low- and no-cost public services to all, while capitalist economies regularly sank into recession and had to continually struggle out of them on the wreckage of human lives.”

Stalin did make mistakes including thinking that the KMT, led by Chiang Kai-Shek was an effective force to defeat the imperialists, an idea discarded after the Shanghai Massacre in 1927 when the KMT [murdered 300-400 Chinese Communists](#). At the same time, Trotsky turning into a virulent critic and Lenin [saying Stalin should go](#) hurt the unity of the CPSU, which made Stalin's job in a governing position of the USSR even harder. Still, the [continuation](#) of the anti-religious campaign, which [began in 1921](#), was wholly justified in an attempt to counter the nasty aspects of religious distortions in society which would ruin the attainment of human betterment.

The Soviet Union was at a good place, especially after Stalin took power. By 1932 and 1933, the medical field in the country was [well organized and well established](#). Doctors were state officials who worked 6-6 1/2 hours every day and there were a total of 76,000 physicians, [an increase of 50,000](#) since the Great October Socialist Revolution. There was also free social and medical help, open attendance at child birth regardless of class, free dental work, public medical centers for workers, the idea of unified medical work in the factory and hospital, and vacations ranging from 12 days to one month depending on the age and type of work. Doctors were also in touch with other elements of the medical practice, there was a specific focus on venereal disease, along with [integration of medicine within and outside institutions](#), coupled with more hospital beds and progress in medical provisions. Other than this, the USSR [made progress](#) in fighting tuberculosis, venereal disease, [especially syphilis](#), doctors outside the “[field of monetary compensation](#)” and near fulfillment of a “[good medical service](#)” with improvements needed to make it better since no medical service is perfect. The 1930s report on Soviet medicine [concluded](#) by saying that the Soviet government was “the most gigantic experiment in the deliberate public organization of social and political life in the world” with abolition of the “motive of private profit,” and engaged in “socialization of medicine” which in some respects goes beyond Western countries, presenting a challenge to other countries.⁶⁹ In times that we despair about the horrid condition of abortion rights in America, we should remember that abortion in the USSR [was legally allowed](#) under a number of parameters, which are reprinted below, showing that there were feminist policies in place:

“In most countries the purposeful production of abortion except for medical reasons is regarded as murder. The Soviet Government in 1920 repealed the existing laws against abortion and legalized it under certain specific conditions. This law contained the provisions summarized below, which are more fully stated in Mrs. Field's *Protection of Women and Children in Soviet Russia*.

1. Abortion must be undertaken only by a licensed surgeon. Midwives are prohibited from performing abortions.
2. It must, as a rule, be the result of a surgical operation, and not of drugs.
3. The patient must afterwards remain in bed in the hospital or place of operation for three full days.
4. She must not be allowed to go to work for two weeks after the operation.

5. For a first pregnancy an abortion must not be performed unless childbirth would seriously endanger the mother's life.'
 6. Abortion is forbidden if the pregnancy has lasted for more than two and a half months.
 7. A doctor cannot refuse an application for abortion, except as stated under 5 and 6. He may, however, discourage it in any way he thinks fit.
 8. It is recommended that all abortions be performed in those State hospitals which have a division for this purpose. An insured woman or the wife of an insured man can claim abortion free of charge in a State hospital. For others a small charge may be made.
 9. A private doctor or anyone else producing an abortion which results in death can be tried for manslaughter. Women cannot be punished for performing on themselves.
 10. The doctor is recommended to discourage a woman from abortion if there are no social, economic, or medical reasons for it, and particularly if she has fewer than three children, or has adequate means for supporting another child.
- It is stated that few abortions are asked for by women desiring to conceal illicit relations... No difficulty has arisen because of the unwillingness of women to come to hospitals for this purpose. No distinction is drawn between married and unmarried women."

With the available resources, there isn't much else I can say about this time period. I can say that on November 16, 1933, the US finally established diplomatic relations with the USSR as noted in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia.⁷⁰

Conclusion

Looking through the sources I gathered for this article, I realize now that I missed a number of aspects: I could have looked more at Stalin's writings, [spanning 1901-1952](#), a book about the [early times of a Bolshevik](#) (1894-1914), and [histories of of the USSR](#), among many other aspects.⁷¹ There are a number of bourgeois and academic sources I found, but alas, I did not go through those either.⁷² This article could undoubtedly be better, but I am only a learner on this subject. I found some sources on r/communism in some quick searching today, but I likely missed something. So, comrades who are reading this, if you can help by providing any sources about Soviet history from 1933 onward, that would be great since there will be future articles in this series.

Endnotes on the following pages, ending on page 22

¹Adam Taylor, "Soviet leader, Gorbachev says a new union could rise again," *Washington Post*, December 13, 2016; Damien Sharkov, "Mikhail Gorbachev on the Soviet Union collapse, Democracy in Russia and Putin's popularity," *Newsweek*, December 13, 2016; Paul Goble, "If the Russians Come Back Again, They Won't Be Constrained By Communism," *Estonian World Review*, December 14, 2016.

²Louise McReynolds, *Russia at Play: Leisure Activities at the End of the Tsarist Era* (London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 4-6, 14, 29, 54.

³V.I. Lenin, "The revolution in 1905: The beginning of the revolution in 1905" (January 25, 1905), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 500-507.

⁴Ibid, 508-509, V.I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution" (1918), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 588-591.

⁵V.I. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 revolution" (1917), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 510-513, 518-519, 524.

⁶Ibid, 529.

⁷McReynolds, 9, 136.

⁸See Morgan Phillip Price's four penny pamphlet titled "[Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia](#)," published in 1918.

⁹John Keegan, *An Illustrated History of the First World War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001), 300-301.

¹⁰ Ibid, 301, 306.

¹¹ Ibid, 306-308.

¹² "A Soviet View of the American Past: An Annotated Translation of The Section on American History in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History*, Vol. 43, No. 1, Autumn 1959, p. 33

¹³ See Morgan Phillip Price's four penny pamphlet titled "[Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia](#)," published in 1918.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Keegan, 308.

¹⁶ Ibid, 309, 311, 316.

¹⁷ See Chapter 2 ("[The Coming Storm](#)") of John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World*.

¹⁸ Keegan, 316.

¹⁹ The term “Bolshevik government” is used here to refer to the rule from 1917-1922. The government that was created after 1922, is called the “Soviet government.” Some say that the “Soviet government” began in 1917, but to say this is confusing since the Soviet Union was not officially created until 1922.

²⁰ By the [end of the year](#), the Bolshevik government said that citizens could recall politicians from office, salaries of high-paid officials were limited, peace talks with the Axis powers began, leaders of the Cadet Party (anti-Bolshevik) are ordered arrested, an eight-hour day is introduced for railway workers, and public education is no longer monopolized by the Russian Orthodox Church. Beyond this, the Council of People’s Commissars says that Ukraine has a right to succeed, the nationalization of banks is announced, and the independence of Finland is accepted.

²¹ See chapter IV (“[The Fall of the Provisional Government](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²² See Chapter V (“[Plunging Ahead](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²³ See Chapter VI (“[The Committee of Salvation](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²⁴ See Chapter VII (“[The Revolutionary Front](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ See Chapter VIII (“[Counter-Revolution](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ See Chapter IX (“[Victory](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

²⁹ See Chapter X (“[Moscow](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ See Chapter XI (“[The Conquest of Power](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

³² Ibid; see Chapter XII (“[The Peasants’ Congress](#)”) of John Reed’s *Ten Days That Shook The World*.

³³ Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction* (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2003, Second Edition), 114-125.

³⁴ See Morgan Phillip Price’s four penny pamphlet titled “[Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia](#),” published in 1918.

³⁵ “A Soviet View of the American Past,” p. 34

³⁶ V.I. Lenin, “The State and Revolution” (1918), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 569-570, 572, 582-583.

- ³⁷ V.I. Lenin, “Marxism and Uprising” (Sept. 1917), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 606-607; V.I. Lenin, “The crisis has matured” (October 12, 1917), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), p. 612-613.
- ³⁸ Josef Stalin, “The October Revolution and the National Question” (1918), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 620-621.
- ³⁹ Josef Stalin, “The October Revolution and the Question of the Middle Strata,” *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 632.
- ⁴⁰ See Morgan Phillip Price’s four penny pamphlet titled “[Capitalist Europe and Socialist Russia](#),” published in 1918.
- ⁴¹ Keegan, 317, 354, 356, 359.
- ⁴² Ibid, 318, 355.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 356, 359-360.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 360-361, 363-364.
- ⁴⁵ Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States* (New York: HarperPerennial, Fifth Edition, 2003), 409; Chronicle of America, “U.S. severs ties with Bolsheviks” (Mount Kisco, NY: Chronicle Publications, 1988), 605.
- ⁴⁶ “A Soviet View of the American Past,” 34, 36.
- ⁴⁷ “A Soviet View of the American Past,” 34, 37.
- ⁴⁸ Zinn, 373, 380, 400, 409; Chronicle of America, “Pacifist Debs gets 10 years in prison,” p. 606.
- ⁴⁹ Chronicle of America, “Left-wing socialists establish own party,” p. 611; Chronicle of America, “US withdraws troops from Soviet Russia,” p. 610; Chronicle of America, US in crusading mood, deports 249 radicals to Soviet Russia,” p. 611; Chronicle of America, “Palmer raids net thousands of leftists,” p. 612; “A Soviet View of the American Past,” p. 35
- ⁵⁰ Keegan, 392, 403.
- ⁵¹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto,” *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 46
- ⁵² Marx and Engels, 67; V.I. Lenin, “What Is to Be Done?,” *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 483; V.I. Lenin, “Lecture on the 1905 Revolution” (1917), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 516.
- ⁵³ McReynolds, 12-13, 33, 292.

⁵⁴ Josef Stalin, “Foundations of Leninism” (1924), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 647-651.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 637-638, 640-641.

⁵⁶ Marx and Engels, 26, 36.

⁵⁷ Marx, “Address to the Communist League” (1850), *The Marxist Reader: The Most Significant and Enduring Works of Marxism* (Illustrated, New York: Avenel Books, 1982), 71.

⁵⁸ This blogger claims that speeding up “socialist construction” in the USSR ultimately led to the USSR’s demise, which is silly since the USSR was in existence from 1922 until 1991, so this person doesn’t know what they are talking about. At the same time, they claim that “the possibility of eventual failure of socialism was built into Stalin’s theory” which just isn’t true.

⁵⁹ Christina Kaier, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 2, 18-19, 38, 165.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 19-20, 23, 25, 29, 81, 173, 264-265.

⁶¹ Ibid, 1, 4-5, 8, 10, 27, 140.

⁶² Ibid, 17, 47, 49, 183, 200-201, 206, 212.

⁶³ Ibid, 43, 52, 71-73, 82-83.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 89, 92, 100-101.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 113-114, 117, 124.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 244.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 27, 58-59, 61, 259.

⁶⁸ McReynolds, 293.

⁶⁹ These authors are at least partially Trotskyist. Still, they offer good analysis when it comes to medicine. [Other chapters](#) talk about industrial and agricultural conditions, and women in Soviet Russia.

⁷⁰ “A Soviet View of the American Past,” p. 46

⁷¹ Other aspects worth mentioning are Alexandra Kollontai [talking about](#) the years of revolution, a [first-hand account](#) of the October Socialist Revolution by Louise Bryant, a book [with biographies](#) of certain personalities in the revolution, Anne Louise Strong’s [book](#) about John Reed’s colony on the Volga, a [page about party Congresses](#), a page [about Soviet foreign policy](#), a page [about Kronstadt](#), a page [chronicling Lenin’s writings](#), a page chronicling [Luxembourg’s writings](#), a page [about the Soviet government](#), a page [chronicling](#) John Reed’s writings, and a page chronicling [Soviet history](#).

⁷² See “The History of Both the February and October Russian Revolutions” on About.com, “War and Revolution in Russia 1914-1921” by Dr. Jonathan Snee on BBCNews, “Causes of the Russian Revolution” on About.com, “Russian Revolution, October, 1917” on Spartacus International, Owen Hatherley, “The constructivists and the Russian revolution in art and architecture” on The Guardian,

and Leon Aron, “Even Vladimir Putin Cannot Kill the Russian Revolution” in Foreign Policy. Academic sources include “The Deepening of the Russian Revolution: 1917” on a MIT website, the Internet Sourcebook [documents](#) on the Russian Revolution, and a [book about](#) the Russian revolution hosted in part by the Library of Congress.